

Delivering Same-Sex Accommodation Declaration of Compliance

Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust is proud to confirm that mixed sex accommodation has been virtually eliminated in our hospital

Every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust is committed to providing every patient with same sex accommodation, because it helps to safeguard their privacy and dignity when they are often at their most vulnerable.

We are proud to confirm that mixed sex accommodation has been virtually eliminated in the hospital. Patients who are admitted to any of our hospital wards will only share the room where they sleep with members of the same sex, and same sex toilets and bathrooms will be close to their bed area.

Sharing a ward area with members of the opposite sex will only happen by exception based on clinical need (for example where patients require specialist care in our Intensive Care or Coronary Care units). We identify these admissions as clinical exceptions.

What does this mean for patients?

Other than in the circumstances set out above, all patients admitted to Whipps Cross Hospital can expect to find the following:

- The **room where your bed is** will only have patients of the same sex as you
- Your **toilet and bathroom** will be just for your gender, and will be close to your bed area

It is possible that there will be both men and women patients on the ward, but they will not share your sleeping area. You may have to cross a ward corridor to reach your bathroom, but you will not have to walk through opposite-sex areas.

You may share some communal space, such as day rooms or dining rooms, and it is very likely that you will see both men and women patients as you move around the hospital (e.g. on your way to X-ray or the operating theatre).

It is probable that visitors of the opposite gender will come into the room where your bed is, and this may include patients visiting each other.

It is almost certain that both male and female nurses, doctors and other staff will come into your bed area.

If you need help to use the toilet or take a bath (e.g. you need a hoist or special bath) then you may be taken to a “unisex” bathroom used by both men and women, but a member of staff will be with you, and other patients will not be in the bathroom at the same time.

The NHS will not turn patients away just because a “right-sex” bed is not immediately available. At Whipps Cross, this may mean that if you require emergency admission you are initially admitted into an inpatient bed that is not the correct sex to ensure you receive the appropriate medical and surgical care required. Our staff will endeavour to move you to the correct sex bed as soon as possible and we aim to do this within a 12 hour period.

What are our plans for the future?

We have plans in place to complete remedial works which will allow us to make our Clinical Decisions Unit (part of the Accident and Emergency unit) single sex compliant. This work due to be completed in early April.

We have developed a culture where all our clinical staff are aware of the importance of ensuring that our wards comply with the single sex guidance. All our Clinical Site Managers are mindful of this when they allocate patients to wards at the time of an emergency admission. The ward nursing teams endeavour to ensure privacy and dignity is maintained at all times and is an integral part of how they care for patients. We have developed Trust policies that reinforce this as a clinical priority for the care of all patients at Whipps Cross.

How will we measure success?

We now collect data every day which details the numbers of patients who were admitted as emergencies to our wards who breached the single sex rules. This is presented to the Trust Board on a monthly basis. In addition we collect information separately on the numbers of patients who were admitted as clinical exceptions to our Intensive Care and Coronary Care unit.

We actively seek to find out the experiences and views of our patients. We undertake monthly patient satisfaction surveys, where 80 patients are asked to give us their views on the service they experienced whilst at Whipps Cross. Within the survey, we ask two questions to determine if the patients experienced single sex accommodation and single sex bathroom facilities.

What do I do if I think I am in mixed sex accommodation?

We want to know about your experiences on our wards. We are launching Dignity Champions on all of our wards in April and there will be a poster and photograph of the ward Dignity Leads available on every ward. Any patients who wish to discuss this aspect of their care or any concerns should contact the Ward Sister, the ward Matron or the ward Dignity Champion.